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*The Theatre: Detail from Screen by Hishikawa Moronobu
Late Seventeenth Century*

Exhibition of Japanese Paintings in Rooms 2, 3, and 4

THE paintings newly hung in the three rooms on the Huntington Avenue side of the main floor of the Japanese wing are representative of three widely different schools of Japanese art: the first and oldest of Indian origin, the second of Chinese origin, and the third purely Japanese.

In the first of these rooms, entered from the Hall of Buddhist Sculpture, are shown examples of the Buddhist School dating from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Buddhism had been filtering into China from the Indian frontier since the be-

ginning of the Christian era, and became a living influence in the third and fourth centuries. Following the apostles of the new faith came Indian artists and Indian artisans for the decoration of its temples. The art thus introduced, somewhat ornate and revelling in brilliant color and voluptuous lines, received at the hands of the more restrained artists of the Chinese classic school a greater dignity and impressiveness; its appeal became one directed more largely to the spirit than to the senses.

This school followed the advent of Buddhism to Japan in the sixth century, and was received with great enthusiasm by the people of the latter



The "Thousand-Armed" Kwannon

Twelfth Century

country, whose more emotional nature gradually invested it with a spirit of human tenderness less abstract than the philosophical conceptions of India and China.

In the centre of the tokonoma is a very fine Fujiwara painting of the twelfth century, representing the "Thousand Armed" Kwannon (Indian Avalokitesvara), the Bodhisattva manifestation of Amida Buddha, Lord of the Western Paradise. Rising from a diadem which encircles the Bodhisattva's brow appears Amida Buddha, while the eleven attributes of Kwannon are symbolized by eleven additional heads. In the centre of the forehead and upon the palms of every hand are all-seeing eyes. Before the "Merciful One's" breast are hands clasped in prayer for the salvation of all creatures; other hands make offering of red and blue lotus to the Blessed Ones; others uphold the Halbert of Sovereignty and Pilgrim's Staff; the Sun and Moon; the Mansions of the Blest and cloud-shaped Blossom of Immortality; twin lotus buds, rising immaculate from Earth's corruption; the Buddhas of the Past and of the Future; the dread mace of Yama, King of Death, and Sword which cleaves through Sin; the Vajra, or thunderbolt of Omnipotence and ever-turning Wheel of Law; the Mirror of self-realization and Tablets of eternal wisdom; the Alms Bowl of the "Holy One" and Sounding Conch of Victory; the Shield which evil dare not face and Battle-Axe of Strength; the flaming Jewels of Life and Fruitfulness; the yak-tail Scourge which drives all sin away, and Ankus (elephant goad), which compels the wayward one back to the narrow path; Ambrosial Fruit and Nectar-yielding Blossoms; the Crystal Waters which cleanse from filth and purify the anointed; the Holy Sutras and Mystic Bond omnipotent over evil; the Matchless Bow and never-erring Arrow; the Vajra Bell which peals through all the worlds and Triple Vajra potent over body, mind and soul; the Rope that binds desire and the Rosary; Hands calling all to share eternal bliss.

The "Nijuhachi Bushu," or Twenty-eight Heavenly Guardians of the Faith, attend the Bodhisattva, from beneath whose feet the waters of Life gush forth. Calm and unshaken, Kwannon stands in golden glory upon the enduring rock, while in the background the Gods of Tempest vainly loose the whirlwind and smite the circling thunder drums.

Looked upon merely as an exquisite composition in which vigor of line and delicacy of feeling unite with glorious yet subdued color in the expression of an ideal, this painting is worthy of a position among the great works of all time. From a technical point of view the wonderful use of cut and applied gold leaf upon the Bodhisattva's robe should be noted. The use of gold in this manner was peculiar to Japan, and the method of cutting and application became a lost secret after the close of the sixteenth century.

The second room is devoted to Japanese paintings of the sixteenth century showing the influence of the Chinese Zen School of Buddhism, a development from the Indian idea of Dhyana or self-attainment of salvation by means of meditation. Even as the priests of this sect abandoned the use of elaborate ritual and highly-decorated images, so the Chinese artists, abandoning the use of bright color and intricate detail, sought by the simplest means to express the inner vital quality of things.

In the painting of Kwannon by Motonobu, here shown, although a certain amount of color has been retained, its use has become little more than suggestive. Multiplicity of symbolism and the appeal of gorgeous raiment and elaborate decoration have been discarded. In another painting Masanobu, instead of depicting the Lord Buddha seated upon his heavenly throne and thence instructing the celestial Rasetsu, shows us the wandering Teacher in his ragged robe, together with Laotse and Confucius, a Chinese conception which shows how thoroughly the teachings of the "Three Sages" had become united in the popular consciousness. In Naomi's sketch Matreya appears as the fat old vagrant Hotei.

Chinese love of nature and the Taoist conception of a harmony underlying all manifestations of the cosmos exerted a strong influence upon the Zen artists, and gave birth during the Sung Dynasty to exquisitely poetic landscapes which fill the soul of the beholder with a spirit of peace and restfulness.

This School reached Japan at a time when the long wars preceding the establishment of the Kamakura Shogunate had developed to a high degree the warrior spirit, which holds performance of duty before every other consideration. This was the age of "Bushido," when the Samurai, before leaving upon a desperate venture, might divorce his wife and break up his home, so that in the hour of trial no thought of those who awaited his return might "give him pause," and the equally self-sacrificing wife hold her burden of shame far dearer than any tie of affection that might lead to her lord's dishonor. As always, the spirit of the age found expression in its art, and much of the delicate charm of the Chinese Zen School gave place in Japan to a spirit of puritanism, which at times became almost brutal in its severity. The Zen painters were very fond of likening the vain and petty strivings of mankind to the mischievous antics of a pack of monkeys, as on three of the screens in the present exhibition, or in yet sterner vein, of comparing their cruelties and sufferings in the struggle for existence to those obtaining in the world of birds and beasts, as on the fourth.

Leaving the Indian and Chinese Schools of an earlier date, we approach in the last room one of purely Japanese origin, the spontaneous outcome of a new social and political era, wherein for the first time the "commons" receive a share in the artistic legacy of the nation hitherto restricted in its field of service to the great lords of Church and State.



The Kwannon by Kano Motonobu 1477-1559

During the Kamakura (1190-1337 A. D.) and Ashikaga periods (1337-1582 A. D.), when the different powerful princes were almost constantly engaged in warfare one with another, the condition of the people at large was a miserable one. During the latter part of the sixteenth century, however, Taiko Hideyoshi, himself of humble birth, succeeded in overcoming the different rebellious elements and welded them together into the united Japan which the Tokugawa Shogunate governed in peace until the restoration of 1868. Hideyoshi, and after him Tokugawa Iyeyasu, developed a vast system of roads and canals, encouraged agriculture and commerce, instituted a school system, and encouraged the people at large as well as the now

unoccupied Samurai in the celebration of popular festivals, the enjoyments of the theatre, etc. Under the new economic conditions wealth began to accumulate, and many artists, trained in the old schools, turned their skill first to the decoration of Hideyoshi's gorgeous palaces and afterwards to the portrayal of popular life and customs. It is true that, side by side with the earlier Buddhist School, the historical Tosa School (one of the finest examples of which is on exhibition in the case under the windows in the second room described) had in brilliant color devoted itself to recording scenes from court and military life, but, like those of the Indian and Chinese Schools, its artists confined themselves to the service of the aristocracy. It remained for the new Ukiyo School to portray the current diversions of the people.

F. G. C.

Mr. Henry C. Frick's Pictures

AT the invitation of the Museum, Mr. Henry C. Frick has kindly consented to loan a number of pictures from his collection for exhibition during the first fortnight of December. The pictures have been installed in the First Modern Room. On the afternoon of December 1 the Annual Subscribers to the Museum were invited to a private view of the exhibition, which was opened to the public on the following morning. The Museum gladly accedes to the condition named by Mr. Frick, that admission to the gallery containing his pictures shall be free to the public, excepting on Mondays. On pay days access to the rest of the Museum may be obtained on payment of the usual admission fee.

The pictures shown are the following :

Rembrandt :

- 1 Portrait of Himself.
- 2 The Polish Rider.
- 3 A Young Painter.

Hals (Franz) :

- 4 Portrait of an Artist.
- 5 Portrait of an Old Lady.
- 6 Bürgermeister.

Hobbema :

- 7 View of a Woody Country.

Ruysdael (Jacob Van) :

- 8 Waterfall.
- 9 View in Amsterdam.

Cuyp :

- 10 Dort (Sunrise on the Maas).
- 11 Herdsman and Cows.
- 12 Fishing-Boats.